

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete listing of revised claims with a status identifier in parenthesis.

Listing of Claims

1. - 107. (Cancelled)

108. (New) A sound masking system for masking sound in a physical environment, said sound masking system comprising:

a communication network for said physical environment;

a plurality of sound masking units, at least some of said sound masking units including a digital processor configured for a sound masking signal generator and a communication interface for coupling to said communication network for receiving a plurality of control signals over said communication network including a masking volume signal and a masking frequency signal, and said sound masking signal generator being responsive to said masking volume signal and said sound masking frequency signal for generating a sound masking output signal, said sound masking output signal having a volume derived from said masking volume signal and a frequency characteristic derived from said sound masking frequency signal;

a control unit configured to generate said control signals including said masking volume signal and said masking frequency signal, and said control unit having a communication interface for coupling to said communication network for transmitting said control signals to selectively control operation of said plurality of sound masking units.

109. (New) The sound masking system as claimed in claim 108, wherein said sound masking unit includes an address component for recognizing control signals intended for the sound masking unit associated with said address component.

110. (New) The sound masking system as claimed in claim 108, wherein said plurality of sound masking units are associated with a plurality of sound masking zones, each of said sound masking units being associated with one of said plurality of sound masking zones, and said sound masking units providing sound masking for said associated sound masking zone independently of said other sound masking zones.

111. (New) The sound masking system as claimed in claim 110, wherein said sound masking units associated with each of said sound masking zones are configured to provide a sound masking output tailored for said associated sound masking zone and said sound masking output being based on said masking volume and said masking frequency signals.

112. (New) The sound masking system as claimed in claim 108, further comprising a plurality of zones, and one or more of said sound masking units being configured for one or more of said zones.

113. (New) The sound masking system as claimed in claim 112, wherein said zones includes one or more of a sound masking zone, a timer zone, and a keypad zone.

114. (New) A sound masking system for controlling the ambient noise in a physical environment, said sound masking system comprising:
a communication network for said physical environment;

a plurality of sound masking units, at least some of said sound masking units including a sound masking generator comprising a processor configured to generate a sound masking signal and a communication interface for coupling to said communication network for receiving one or more control signals over said communication network including a masking volume signal and a masking frequency signal, and said sound masking generator being responsive to said masking volume signal and said sound masking frequency signal for generating said sound masking signal;

a control unit configured to generate said one or more control signals including said masking volume signal and said masking frequency signal, and said control unit having a communication interface for coupling to said communication network for transmitting said one or more control signals to selectively control operation of said plurality of sound masking units;

a plurality of zones, and one or more of said sound masking units being configured for one or more of said plurality of zones.

115. (New) The sound masking system as claimed in claim 114, wherein said zones include one or more of a sound masking zone, a non-masking zone, a timer zone, and a keypad zone.

116. (New) A networkable sound masking device comprising:

an interface configured to interface to a network;

a processor configured to receive one or more control signals from said interface, said one or more control signals being intended for the networkable sound masking device and said one or more control signals comprising a masking volume signal and a masking frequency signal;

said processor being configured to generate a sound masking signal in response to said masking frequency signal; and

an output stage configured to output said sound masking signal.

117. (New) The networkable sound masking device as claimed in claim 116, wherein said interface includes an address component configured to recognize said one or more control signals intended for the networkable sound masking device.

118. (New) The networkable sound masking device as claimed in claim 116, wherein said output stage comprises an amplifier and said processor being configured to control said output stage in response to said masking volume signal.

119. (New) The networkable sound masking device as claimed in claim 116, wherein said sound masking module comprises a random noise generator having an output coupled to an equalizer stage, and said processor being configured to control said equalizer stage in response to said masking frequency signal.